



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

ICE AGENTS ARREST ILLEGAL ALIENS AT OMAHA NUCLEAR PLANT

-- Arrests are latest in series of illegal alien apprehensions at nuclear facilities in recent months --

BLAIR, Neb. — In the latest in a series of arrests involving illegal aliens at nuclear facilities, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agents arrested three illegal aliens here Tuesday when they attempted to enter the outer secure area of the Omaha Public Power District's Fort Calhoun Nuclear Station to perform contract work at the plant for the first time.

The three men, all citizens of Mexico, had been hired by an independent contractor to perform maintenance work at the nuclear facility. As they attempted to enter a secure area of the plant, the men presented identification documents that raised the suspicions of Omaha Public Power District employees. They contacted ICE special agents for assistance, who responded and arrested the men after determining that they were illegally present in the United States.

All three men have been placed in immigration removal proceedings. ICE agents are investigating the circumstances under which the private contractor hired the illegal aliens. ICE agents have determined that the illegal aliens were not engaged in any terrorist activity.

"America's security depends on controlling access to sensitive facilities like nuclear power plants," said Michael Wardy, Resident Agent-in-Charge of the ICE office in Omaha. "ICE works closely with these industries across the nation to identify vulnerabilities that pose a potential security threat, then we aggressively act to remove that threat. In this case, the system worked exactly the way it was supposed to because the nuclear plant detected the illegal aliens before they could enter."

The enforcement action in Nebraska is the latest in a series of ICE arrests involving illegal aliens performing contract work at nuclear plants and other nuclear-related facilities around the country. For example:

- On March 18, 2005, ICE agents arrested an illegal alien who was performing contract pipe insulation work at the Duane Arnold Energy Center Nuclear Power Plant in Palo, Iowa. A federal grand jury later indicted the illegal alien on criminal charges of using and possessing

fraudulent documents, as well as making false statements to federal agents. Duane Arnold Energy Center uncovered discrepancies in documents presented by the alien and alerted authorities.

- During a two-week period in March 2005, ICE agents arrested six illegal aliens performing contract maintenance work at the Crystal River Nuclear Power Plant in Citrus, Florida. All were employees of a specialty services company that is now cooperating in an ongoing ICE investigation. One of the illegal aliens was indicted on criminal charges of re-entering the country after deportation, while the others have been placed in immigration removal proceedings.
- On November 7, 2004, ICE agents arrested 44 illegal aliens at the Marley Cooling Technologies factory in Olathe, Kansas, where cooling towers for nuclear plants are manufactured. The illegal aliens had used fraudulent documents and had made false statements to gain employment at the facility. The aliens were placed into immigration removal proceedings. Marley Cooling Technologies cooperated in the investigation.

These arrests are part of Operation Glow Worm, a joint operation launched by ICE and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission after 9/11 to screen the workforce at the nation's 104 nuclear power plants. To date, investigations have been completed at 56 nuclear plants and 1,005 related employers have been inspected, with audits of 64,835 employees having been completed. Numerous unauthorized workers have been arrested and warning notices have been issued to those employing unauthorized workers.

In accordance with ICE's homeland security mission, ICE special agents prioritize worksite enforcement efforts by focusing on investigations related to critical infrastructure and national security. Unauthorized workers employed at sensitive sites and critical infrastructure facilities — such as airports, seaports, nuclear plants, chemical plants, and defense facilities — pose serious homeland security threats.

Not only are the identities of these individuals in question, but these aliens are also vulnerable to exploitation by terrorists and other criminals given their illegal status in this country. Furthermore, these individuals have access to some of the most sensitive worksites in the nation. ICE often works with employers in these cases to identify and immediately remove illegal workers from these sensitive locations.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.